

BOOK REVIEW

STATES, JACK. S. 1990. **Mushrooms and Truffles of the Southwest.** (ISBN 0-8165-1192-6. pbk). The University of Arizona Press, 1230 N Park Ave., Suite 102, Tucson, AZ 85719, Price not given, 234 pp, 156 color photos.

This is the first publication that covers such a broad range of fungi for southwestern United States according to the author. Coverage also includes the Myxomycetes and lichens, organisms usually not discussed or illustrated, along with traditional fungal groups such as mushrooms and their relatives. Southwestern geographically includes Arizona, New Mexico, and parts of Colorado, Utah, Nevada, California and northern Mexico. The natural history of mushrooms is emphasized by directing the reader to life zones and plant communities where species can be found. Life zones are illustrated by maps. Keys lead to descriptions and color illustrations for 156 of the major mushroom and truffle species. There are additional descriptions for 155 other species. A unique feature of this book is the inclusion of cross-references to assist in species identification. There are eight different cross-references for mushrooms that serve as field guides and one for lichens. There are no references for Myxomycetes.

Introductory topics include an excellent discussion of life zones of the Southwest. There is a picture key to the major groups of fungi based on black and white illustrations of fruiting bodies and also a narrative dichotomous key. The Basidiomycetes represent the largest treatment of fungi, covering 129 pages with keys to the families based on macroscopic characters, for example, spore print colors. Indeed, the book is written more for the amateur using nontechnical, easily understood characters to identify species. The format is very user friendly with color illustrations (4" × 2 1/2") grouped usually two to a page or sometimes one per page with the name of the species and species description on the same page. The habit color photographs are of excellent quality and oriented to show the necessary key characters. There is a comments section for each species that discusses the edibility or toxic properties, ecology, and special morphological features. The Ascomycetes are represented by 32 pages and 18 pages are devoted to the tuberlike Ascomycetes and Basidiomycetes (the truffles and false truffles). This section of the book is especially valuable since this group of fungi is usually absent from field guides. However, a combination of the small size of these underground fungi, lack of bright coloration and distinctive morphology, and failure to stand out against a drab background of soil, litter, or man-made surfaces makes it difficult to clearly discern surface features and color. Eight pages are devoted to an assortment of lichens on rocks and branches of trees. There is a glossary of 65 terms defined. The bibliography is not extensive, consisting of the cross-references, six additional field guides, and suggested readings that mentions four books. Anyone interested in the fungi of the southwestern region of the United States will find this book a welcomed addition to their bookshelf.—*Harold W. Keller, Research Associate, BRIT.*